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THE HOLY DAYS OF THE CHURCH.



"We Praise Thee, O God."

THE

HOLY DAYS OF THE CHURCH.

BY

MRS. MARY E. BRADLEY.

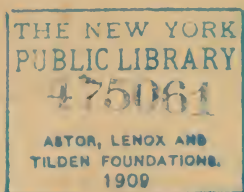
"Oh say not, dream not, heavenly notes
To childish ears are vain,
That the young mind at random floats,
And cannot reach the strain.
Dim or unheard the words may fall,
And yet the heaven-taught mind
May learn the sacred air, and all
The harmony unwind."

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IN MEMORY OF

A LAMB OF THE FLOCK,

WHO DIED JANUARY 15, 1860.

1*



P R E F A C E.

THIS little book is designed to give simple explanations of the Holy Days of the Church, adapted to children, and to *all*, indeed, who ask, with regard to them, "What mean ye by this service?" The poetry and illustrations are added to make it more attractive to the young, but it will be found that the former often embodies in a devotional form the teaching of the day. It is not intended to take the place of the excellent works of Nelson and Bishop Hobart on the Festivals and Fasts, but to furnish a more convenient manual for children, parents, and Sunday-school teachers, and for circulation by missionaries.




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THE HOLY DAYS.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

O the children of the Church there is a special beauty and comfort in *the Church's anniversaries*. Coming from year to year at their stated times, each with its voice of warning or blessing, they bid us pause awhile in the rush and hurry of our worldly employments, to give ear to some tender memory, some solemn admonition, or some blessed example, and by the aid of its teaching conform our lives more and more to the rule laid down by our Lord and Saviour—

“Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.”

None can tell how sweet and holy an influence they have exerted in all the ages through which they have been handed down

to us. How the Church's rejoicings at Christmas, her solemn contrition and self-abasement in Lent, her triumphant exultation at Easter, have thrilled and softened hearts that without such aids and reminders would have continued forever "dead in trespasses and sins;" how they have nerved and strengthened anew souls that were fainting, almost despairing, in their weary struggle with "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

We go at Christmas-tide into God's "holy temple," and our hearts burn within us as we listen to the heavenly song of "peace on earth, good will to men." We commemorate His manifestation to the Gentiles, and give inward thanks for our gracious calling, typified thereby. We humble our souls with fasting and prayer as the time of His great sorrow approaches. We follow Him to His cross on the awful day when He "*was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men.*" We wait at the door of the sealed sepulchre, trembling with joyful hope of the resurrection. We swell with glad, exulting voices the thrilling strain, "Christ is risen from the dead!" when Easter morning dawns upon us in its beauty.

Then, when the happy days in which the

disciples beheld their Master once more, have passed, we witness with them His glorious ascension. At Whitsun-tide we are "with one accord in one place," to give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter sent unto us from the Father; and soon again we assemble for the feast of Trinity, and adore our Father, our Saviour, our Comforter, as ONE GOD.

So the Church's year bears us onward from one precious season to another; and so the memory of all these solemn mysteries—so awful, so needful to be remembered!—is kept alive in our hearts—hearts that of themselves, alas! are too prone to forget and pass them by.

Alas! too, that with all the aids the Church offers her children, in thus providing stated times and occasions when by solemn outward ceremony we may recall the sacred scenes of our Saviour's presence amongst us, and cultivate such tempers as shall fit us for his second coming—so many of us should be heartless and indifferent still!

God forgive us all! and help us so to love His holy word, and so to cherish all things that may aid us in the better understanding of it, that "His household, the Church," may be no longer open to such reproach, but "kept in continual godliness."



SUNDAY, OR THE LORD'S DAY.

SUNDAY is always a feast in the Church—that is, a day of religious joy. As every Friday through the year reminds us of the crucifixion, so Sunday continually recalls the bright Easter, when our Lord rose from the darkness of the tomb to die no more. Therefore it is called the LORD'S DAY—the day of all the seven which He honored by His resurrection, and which all Christians hallow with prayer and praise, resting from common labor.

Sunday is not the Sabbath. The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week; Sunday, the Lord's day, is the first. The Sabbath celebrated God's rest from the work of creation; Sunday remembers our Lord's resurrection. The Sabbath was Jewish; the Lord's day is a Christian festival. Early Jewish Christians kept both days, the seventh and the first; and writers of the Greek Church refer to their custom of assembling for worship on the Sabbath and the Lord's day, meaning Saturday and Sunday. Languages of Europe make the same proper distinction; thus, *Sábato* in Italian, *Sábado* in Spanish, meaning Sabbath, is the name for Saturday; and *Doménica* in Italian, *Domingo* in Spanish, meaning Lord's day, is the name for Sunday.

Evangelists and apostles, in the New Testament, refer always to the seventh day, Saturday, when they speak of the Sabbath; but when they speak of the chief occasion of Christians' meeting for the eucharist, and offertory, and preaching, they call it, as St. Luke in the Acts, and St. Paul to the Corinthians, "the first day of the week;" or, with St. John, the LORD'S DAY, for he says in the Apocalypse, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."

Our Church applies these names with correctness and propriety. Of course, she would

not alter the language of Scripture when reciting the commandments from the Old Testament. But when she tells us, "keep holy the Sabbath day," and "the Lord blessed the seventh day," she instructs us to observe the law in its spirit, by making of one day in the seven a special rest and holy day of worship. Taught by our Lord's authority, through His inspired apostles, we use, with "the holy Church throughout all the world," the first day instead of the seventh—the Lord's day instead of the Jewish Sabbath. And her language is fitly conformed to her usage when she refers to the first day of the week by its proper name; for through all the Prayer-book it is Sunday—the *Sundays* in Advent, Sundays after Epiphany, Sundays in Lent, Sundays after Easter, Sundays after Trinity. "Let us no longer *sabbatize*, but keep the day on which our *Lord* arose."

ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

(NOVEMBER 30.)

“One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.”—JOHN i: 40.

THIS feast is placed at the beginning of the Church's year, because St. Andrew was the first called to be an apostle, and the first to proclaim to others the coming of the Messiah. Advent Sunday is always the one nearest it, either before or after, and may even fall upon the same day. St. Andrew was born in Bethsaida of Galilee, was a brother of St. Peter, and, like him, a poor fisherman until both were called by our Lord to become “fishers of men.” Church history says that after



our Saviour's ascension, he preached the Gospel on the shores of the Black Sea, or the region now known as the famous Crimea, and that he was martyred at Patræ, in Achaia. By urging his converts there to be steadfast, and not return to their old idolatry, he enraged the heathen magistrate, who had him cruelly scourged and then crucified. His cross was shaped like an X—the Greek initial for the name of Christ—and he was bound to it with cords, in order to make his death more lingering. We are told that he hung upon it two days, exhorting the people; and when they besought the magistrate to spare his life, he prayed that God would permit him to die then, and seal his doctrine with his blood; and his prayer was granted. His body was embalmed and buried by a noble lady named Maximilla, and was afterward removed to Constantinople by Constantine, the first Christian emperor, who there buried it in a great church he had built to the honor of the apostles.

St. Andrew is an example to us not only in his constancy, but in his act of bringing his brother to Christ. Let us ponder it deeply, and urge ourselves onward to new labors of love for the souls that are most dear to us. It

may be but a little while that we shall see around our firesides the faces that we love best in this life, and bitter exceedingly would be the thought that in another world any one of them should be shut out from our sight forever. All of us—even the smallest child that has learned its need of a Saviour—may do something, if only by a simple word now and then, the silent force of a meek and pious life, or the loving prayer that God hears in secret but rewards openly. Let us, then, do what we may while yet we have time, and especially at this season, lose no opportunity to “bring unto Jesus” some “brother” who has not yet “found the Messiah.”

“**A**RE there for us some brethren dear,
Near to our hearts, but not so near
To God, as they should be?
For whom we know no peace or rest,
Until they choose the thing that's best,
And Christ's salvation see?


“Then let us come, and one and all
Use this glad Christian festival
For special prayer and praise;
Prayer for the lost to be restored,
Praise for the loved ones, whom the Lord
Hath brought unto His ways.

“And as the rolling year brings round
The memory of some lost one found,
Some loved one gone astray ;
Still let each household grief or joy,
Our hearts’ best faith and love employ,
On each St. Andrew’s Day.”



ADVENT.

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”—ROMANS xiii: 12.

S the seasons of our civil year change with the course of the world around the central sun, so do the Church's seasons wait upon Him who is “the Sun of Righteousness.” First in order is Advent, and its name means “coming.”

At this time we are not only reminded of our Saviour's first coming “in great humility” to our sinful world, but more especially of His second appearing “in glorious Majesty,” when “He shall come to judge both the quick and the dead.” During the four Sundays of Advent, while we are drawing near the Feast of our Lord's Nativity, and are bidden to meditate in their turn the final judgment, the sacred Scriptures, the ministry of Jesus, and to “rejoice in the Lord alway,” a voice of warning sounds through them all, reminding us that “now it is high time to awake out of sleep.” The Lord is near, though hidden from mortal eyes.

Let us then renew our self-examinations and add fervor to our prayers. Now is the time to trim our lamps that they be in readiness for the Bridegroom's coming; to shake off spiritual languor and heaviness; to break the chains of evil habits that have fastened upon us unaware, and drive out unholy thoughts that have crept, we scarce know how or when, into our bosoms.

While we prepare to keep the Feast of the Saviour's Birth, may we heed the stirring call to be ever watchful, ever ready for His second Advent, which shall be proclaimed with the Trump of the Archangel.

“**P**O! He comes, in clouds descending,
Once on earth for sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train.

Hallelujah!

Jesus comes on earth to reign.

“Every eye shall now behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.

“ Yet with mingled hope and fearing,
Wait we still our Judge to see ;
In the day of Thine appearing,
Spotless, blameless may we be !
Ever watching,
Teach us, Lord, to welcome Thee.”





EMBER DAYS.

“Know them which are over you in the Lord.”—THESS. iv: 12.

THERE are certain days set apart for fasting and prayer, before the ordinations which are performed in the Church on the following Sundays. In this practice we copy the example of the apostles, who prayed and fasted before laying their hands on those separated for the work of the ministry.

The Ember days occur at four seasons of the year, being the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the first Sunday in Lent, after Whitsun-day, after the fourteenth of September, and after the thirteenth of December.

It is proper that deacons and priests should be ordained on the Sundays immediately following these Ember fasts.

Let us all at such times earnestly pray for our bishops and pastors.

“ **A**ND, at each solemn Ember-tide,
When those who rule God's Church,
accord
The lot they cast, but cannot guide,
For its disposal to the Lord ;

“ Let us their consecrating hands
With fervent faith sustain on high,
And o'er the kneeling, white-robed bands
Thus help to guide them willingly.”

3



ST. THOMAS' DAY.

(DECEMBER 21.)

“Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands. . . . And be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.”—ST. JOHN XX: 27, 28.

THE name of St. Thomas has been handed down to us as that of the doubting apostle. When the rest of the apostles assured him of our Saviour's resurrection, he refused to believe until his own eyes had seen, and his own hands touched Him. Our Lord then, pitying his weakness, and willing to silence his doubts forever, appeared again to His disciples when Thomas was with them, and quickly convinced him of the blissful certainty.

This act of unbelief on the



part of St. Thomas has an advantage for us, inasmuch as it confirms our faith in our Saviour's resurrection, and assures us most truly that He rose again in the very same body in which He suffered death. Thus we see how out of evil God can draw good, and make even the falls and faults of His saints the means of safety and life to others.

After the ascension he preached the Gospel in Parthia, and some of the ancients tell how he met with the Magi, countrymen of those wise men who came from afar to worship the newborn Saviour. He baptized several of them, and made use of them as assistants in his ministry. After which he passed through Ethiopia, and at last came to India ; where, after having made many converts, he was murdered by the soldiers one day, while praying outside of the city of Melapore. His body was buried by his disciples in a church which he had caused to be built in the same city.

“ **D**OUBTING soul, lay down thy fears,
For the Lord is nigh thee ;
Joy for sadness, smiles for tears,
Jesus will supply thee.

“ Plead not reason’s poor pretence,
Trust what God hath told thee;
Lean not on thine erring sense
When His arms infold thee.

“Thou would’st with thine eyes behold
What thy soul desireth;
Thou would’st to thine ears have told
What thy sense requireth.


“ Faith, inured to harder tasks,
In submission kneeleth,
Nor with doubting Thomas asks
More than God revealeth.”



CHRISTMAS DAY.

(DECEMBER 25.)

“Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—LUKE ii: 11.

O-DAY we celebrate the Nativity, or Birth of Christ. It is a day of gladness and rejoicing, since the Incarnation of the Son of God, or “the Word made flesh,” is the most sublime mystery of our redemption, and the source of all our blessings. Although any day set apart by the Church for special commemoration claims our thankful observance, yet this one we honor as in very deed the birth-day of our Lord.

It was kept in the earliest ages of the Church, for we may be sure the exact day would never be forgotten by the first Christians, or their descendants.



The beloved St. John, who took home the mother of our Lord, would doubtless tell it to his disciples as learned from her own lips. Moreover, the birth of our Saviour occurred at the time of the taxation or enrolment of all the world under the decree of the Roman emperor Cæsar Augustus, as you may read in the second chapter of St. Luke. It was therefore duly registered in the public records, kept in the city of Rome, and being connected with this great census could easily be found at any time.

These records were not destroyed until the end of the fourth century, when Rome was sacked by the Goths, and the Christian religion had been for one hundred years the established faith of the empire.

Early writers refer to them in this manner: "Finally concerning the census (or enrolment) of Augustus, which the Roman archives preserve as a faithful witness of the Lord's Nativity."


St. Augustine, who was fifty-six years old at the time of the invasion of the Goths, has left thirteen Christmas sermons, preached by him on the 25th of December, in which he says that it was our Lord's birth-day, without any attempt to prove it, as though proof

was unnecessary, because the fact was well known.

Before the custom of its observance had become general throughout the entire Church, St. Chrysostom says in a sermon preached A. D. 386: "It is lawful for any one who wishes to know accurately, to search the ancient records publicly deposited in Rome, and there learn the time of that enrolment;" "we have received this day from those who have tarried there, having celebrated it from the beginning." From the days of these eminent bishops until the present time, we know that it has been thus kept by the great body of the Church Universal.

When this day of all days dawns upon the earth, the Christian world to its furthest limit sends upward the glad song of praise, "Glory to God in the highest!" Friends and brothers meet together, and good wishes and congratulations pass from heart to heart; the children greet one another with loving words and happy faces; gifts of affection are interchanged, and the Christmas fires glow warm and bright as the happy household groups cluster about them. Even the faces of the poor and sorrowful shine for a while with the universal joy; for now is the time when all

who love their Lord will especially remember His poor children, and gladly distribute to their necessities. Christ has come to bring pardon and peace to us, and we in turn should extend love, and kindness, and forgiveness to all who have done us wrong. In His holy temple, the air is fragrant with the spicy breath of woven wreaths, and clustered boughs and branches that loving hands have brought to "beautify the place of His sanctuary;" throngs of worshippers blend their voices in prayer and praise, and the Holy Church throughout all the world acknowledges her Lord, and does honor to His birth-day. May it grow more and more holy to us, and each succeeding year find our spirits more attuned to its sacred joy, more meet to welcome Him who is our Saviour, our Lord, and our King forever.

"NGELS, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth,
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth;
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

“Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o’er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing—
Yonder shines the infant light;
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

“Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar,
Seek the great Desire of nations,
Ye have seen His natal star;
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

“Saints, before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord descending,
In His temple shall appear;
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

“Sinners, wrung with true repentance,
Doom’d for guilt to endless pains,
Justice now revokes the sentence,
Mercy calls you, break your chains;
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.”

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

(DECEMBER 26.)

“And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! and when he had said this, he fell asleep.”—Acts vii: 55.

WE celebrate on this day the festival of St. Stephen, the first Martyr to the truth of Jesus, and the first-named of the seven Deacons whom the Apostles appointed as the treasures of the Church, to administer to the necessities of the poor, make provision for the public feasts, and perform other holy offices appropriate to their rank as ministers of Christ.



St. Stephen, we are told, was “a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,” and “did

great wonders and miracles among the people." He was brought before the council on a false charge of blasphemy, and there by his fervent and fearless eloquence, so enraged the judges, that "they ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him."

In dying he imitated the example of his Lord, to whom he had been faithful unto death, by praying for his murderers, and thus proves to us the possibility of obeying, even to the letter, our Saviour's command, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Let us rightly improve this Festival by taking this holy lesson into our hearts, as well as by stirring up our minds to emulate the earnest zeal and the lofty courage and constancy with which St. Stephen labored and died in his Master's cause.

"**W**ITH awful dread his murderers shook,
As radiant and serene,
The lustre of his dying look
Was like an angel's seen,
Or Moses' face of paly light,
When down the mount he trod,
All glowing from the glorious sight
And presence of his God.

“To us with all his constancy,
Be his rapt vision given,
To look above by faith and see
Revelments bright of heaven;
And power to speak our triumphs out,
As our last hour draws near,
While neither clouds of fear or doubt
Before our view appear.”

4



ST. JOHN'S DAY.

(DECEMBER 27.)

“Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved.”—JOHN xiii : 23.

ST. JOHN, the Evangelist, was the beloved disciple of our Lord, the one who above all others was distinguished by His favor, and who above all others, perhaps, returned it with a peculiar devotion. He leaned upon Jesus’ bosom; he followed Him into the high priest’s hall when all the rest had fled, and even Peter stood aloof;




and to him was given by our Saviour on the cross, the precious charge of providing for and cherishing the virgin Mother.

His ministry was exercised in Asia Minor, and probably in other parts of the East. He founded six of the churches mentioned in the Apocalypse, and dwelt chiefly at Ephesus, where St. Paul had many years before planted the Church. From this place he was carried a prisoner to Rome, where by command of the Emperor Domitian he was cast into a cauldron of oil set on fire; but by command of One greater than Domitian, the flames had no power to harm him, and he came forth alive. The emperor, disappointed and enraged, paid no heed to the miracle, but ordered him to be banished into the island of Patmos, in the Archipelago, where he wrote his sublime Revelation, and instructed the inhabitants in the faith of Christ. He was recalled, after some years, by the Emperor Nerva, and returned to Ephesus, where he wrote his Gospel and Epistles, and governed the Church until the time of Trajan; in the beginning of whose reign he died.

The ministry of St. John was peculiarly a ministry of love—the love to God and our neighbor, which our Lord Himself declared,

fulfils all the commandments. "Little children, love one another," was his perpetual exhortation, when age and weakness prevented him from preaching any thing more. Shall not we "little children" especially remember this injunction on the day which the Church appoints for honoring one whom the Master so honored, and let its gentle influence ever pervade our lives?

His symbol is an eagle; as if he would soar into the mysteries of Christ's divine nature, or bear on wings the everlasting Gospel to the ends of the earth.

"N my Saviour's bosom leaning,
Drawing thence his mystic meaning,
Hearing there the springs that move
His unutterable love.

"Waiting, watching, ling'ring near Him,
All life long to love and fear Him,
Finding this my best employ,
Ceaseless business, purest joy!

"Thus while years away are wearing,
For the coming night preparing,
For the night, and then the day,
When the shadows flee away.

“ So, my soul, with each returning
Of this day, let all my yearning
Be, with gentle John to rest
Ever on my Saviour's breast.”

4*





THE INNOCENTS' DAY.

(DECEMBER 28.)

“These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.”—REVELATION xiv: 4.

IN this festival, the Church lovingly remembers those little ones slain by the cruel Herod, who were the first martyrs for their Lord. For “it hath been observed, that there are three sorts of martyrdoms: the first in will and deed, which was the case of most of the Apostles; the second in will, but not in deed, which was the case of St. John the Evangelist; the third in deed, but not in will, which was the case of the Holy Innocents.” The Collect says that they glorified God by their deaths, and the

Revelation counts them among those blest souls "which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," "being the first fruits" of His redeemed.

This, the Church's Feast for Children, reminds us of their relations to the kingdom of heaven.

Since our Saviour said, "Suffer them to come unto me," they should be made His own in Holy Baptism, and trained for His service. When even those of mature years would come to that sacrament, they must first "become as little children."

You, in your youth, who hear to-day the touching story of the infant martyrs, may not be called as they were to glorify God by your deaths; but each one of you may glorify Him as well by a gentle and obedient life, by trying to avoid every wrong thing that would grieve Him, and also by loving and reverencing the holy days and services of His Church.

"IN Bethlehem was heard a cry,
Voices of wo and wailing,
Whose mingled dirge rose mournfully
With sorrow unavailing.

'Tis very sad to bid farewell
To fathers, sisters, brothers ;
But the deep grief, oh ! who may tell,
That wrings bereaved mothers ?

“To take the stars away from heaven,
And leave it all in sadness ;
To take from earth the bright flowers given
To lend it joy and gladness ;
To take, when all with music rife,
The birds from out the wild-wood ;
Oh, such it is to take from life
Bright, happy, laughing childhood.

“But they are now bright flowers above,
To Paradise transplanted,
And blooming in a soil of love,
Where constant sunshine's granted.
Yea, they are blessed and radiant now,
In green and tranquil places,
Eternal glory on their brow,
Smiles ever on their faces.”





THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

(JANUARY 1.)

“The Lord, thy God, will circumcise thine heart.”—DEUTERONOMY xxx: 6.

ALL the world knows that to-day is New Year's Day, and all the world will celebrate it after some fashion or other, because it is the beginning of another year of man's busy, working, crowded life. The Church of Christ calls her children to celebrate it because on this day her Lord began His saving work for us. He submitted to the rite of circumcision that He might fulfil the law, and so render a perfect obedience for us: as in his baptism and regard for every

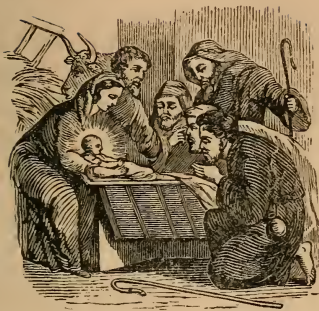
duty, He sets us a beautiful example how we should “fulfil all righteousness.”

Let us begin this New Year—full of untold trial and temptation—with the earnest resolves that the feast is designed to call forth; “mortifying the flesh,” and seeking the fulfilment of God’s promise, that He will circumcise our *hearts*, that we may live.

“**M**Y soul! wouldst thou with happiness
The opening year begin?
Come kneel by Jesus’ cradle-bed,
And count the cost of sin!

“His tears were wept to dry thine eyes,
His grief was for thy gain,
The octave of thy song of joy
Was His first cry of pain.

“Thence let the year its coloring
Of sober duty take,
Rise up, go forth, do every thing
For thy dear Saviour’s sake.”



THE EPIPHANY.

(JANUARY 6.)

“And lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them till it came and stood where the young child was.”

—ST. MATTHEW ii : 9.

THIS feast is observed with great propriety by the Church, and should be celebrated with great thankfulness by us Gentiles, because on this day (whose name signifies *manifestation*) the Saviour of the world was made known to the

Gentiles. A strange and beautiful star appeared to certain wise men of the East, and God put it into their hearts to follow the star until it led them to the spot where the Infant King lay; showing thus that it was His will to include, not only His chosen people the Jews, but all the nations of the earth, "even to its uttermost parts," in His great salvation.

The day is also called Twelfth-day, as it falls on the twelfth after Christmas, and Twelfth-night is often a time of merry-making and gayety. There was an ancient custom of preparing for this festival little cakes of spice covered with gold, in memory of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh which the wise men presented to our Saviour. From this came the practice of making the rich and gayly-ornamented loaves which are known as Twelfth-night cakes, and which in England are everywhere exhibited on this holiday.

Gifts of gold were offered to kings, fumes of burning incense rise to God as prayer, and myrrh embalmed the dead. So, by their offerings, the Magi own our Saviour, King, and God, and Sacrifice. Let us, too, bring Him our golden charity, the incense of devotion, and the myrrh of self-denial.

“LONG time ago, a wondrous star
Led o’er a trackless way
Three Gentile sages from afar,
To where an Infant lay—


“In swaddling clothes all helpless bound,
In poor and mean abode;
And there in Him all Gentiles found
Their Saviour and their God.

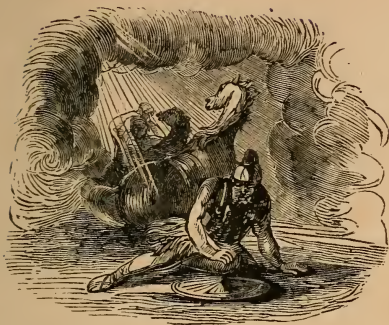
“Thence come all joy, all love, all light
That gladden Christian homes;
Our very safety day and night
From that one Dwelling comes.

“Cold, then, and heartless they must be,
Who all these blessings share,
Yet grudge, on Christ’s Epiphany,
Their meed of praise and prayer.

“Lord, keep us from such sinfulness,
And give us grace to prove,
How they, who daily debts confess,
Should render love for love.”

SUNDAYS AFTER EPIPHANY.

 S on the feast of the Epiphany our Saviour was shown to the Gentiles, kings, and Magians from the East, so the Sundays after the Epiphany serve to manifest His glory further to the world by recounting His miracles, signs that He is the expected Messiah, and proofs of His divine and wondrous power. The Gospels display His wisdom among the doctors, His prophecies to His disciples, or His mighty deeds on land and sea; now changing water to wine at Cana, now curing a leper by a touch, a paralytic by a word, or stilling the waves of stormy Gennesaret. The number of the Sundays after Epiphany varies from one to six, in dependence on the moveable feast of Easter, queen of festivals.



THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

(JANUARY 25.)

“And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth.”—Acts ix: 3, 4.

THIS feast is worthily placed next to the Epiphany, for it commemorates the manifestation of Christ to one who was at first a great persecutor, and afterward a great teacher and leader of the Christians. It pleased the Lord to make himself known to Saul in a wonderful manner, at the very time when he was breathing out threaten-

ings and slaughter against the disciples. His eyes were blinded, but his soul was enlightened; and thenceforth he himself became willing to suffer all things, even unto death, in behalf of the Master whom he had despised, and whose followers he had pursued with such cruel hatred.

We may well remember this event with reverence and thankfulness, since it not only proved so wonderfully the power of God, but has left such mighty and enduring results for our good. Though the last called, St. Paul labored more abundantly than any of the Apostles, and did more to extend the Gospel, by planting churches "even to the utmost bound of the west," and writing for their instruction and confirmation epistles which shall remain for the edification of the Christian world, to the end of time. He has well deserved by his labors among heathen nations the title of "Apostle to the Gentiles." After a life of unexampled suffering and achievements, he was beheaded at Rome in a general persecution of the Christians, under Nero.

“WHOSE is that sword—that voice and eye
of flame,

That heart of inextinguishable ire?

Who bears the dungeon-keys, and bonds, and
fire?

Along his dark and withering path he came—

Death in his looks, and terror in his name,

Tempting the might of Heaven's Eternal Sire.

Lo, the LIGHT shone! the sun's veiled beams
expire.

“A Saviour's self, a Saviour's lips proclaim!

Whose is yon form stretched on the earth's cold
bed,

With smitten soul, and tears of agony,

Mourning the past? Bowed is the lofty head—

Rayless the orbs that flashed with victory.

Over the raging waves of human will

The Saviour's spirit walked—and all was still!”


5*



THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST.

(FEBRUARY 2.)

“They brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.”—ST. LUKE ii: 22.

 HIS is a double festival, bringing to remembrance the presentation of the Holy Child in the temple, according to the law, and also the offering made by His mother, her purification being accomplished. For, forty days after the birth of a son, the mother, if rich, offered a lamb for a sacrifice, or if poor, like blessed Mary, she brought two turtle-doves, or pigeons. It is called Candlemas day in England, from an ancient practice of lighting candles in the churches at its celebration, symbolizing “*the light to lighten the Gentiles*,” of whom Simeon spake. We learn from its observance to purify ourselves both in body and soul; and to practise that obedience which our Saviour

and the blessed Virgin taught by their example.



“THE days of separation past,
Commanded by the word,
The Virgin Mary brings her child
To offer to the Lord.

“More than a mother’s common joy
Her thoughtful heart beguiled,
For to her breast she knew she prest
More than a common child.

“The hope of all the ends of earth
Then on her bosom lay,
Whom saints had sought, while prophets taught
The coming of His day.”



ST. MATTHIAS' DAY.

(FEBRUARY 24.)

“The lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”
—Acts i: 26.

ST. MATTHIAS was probably one of the seventy disciples chosen under divine guidance to be an apostle in the place of the traitor Judas. The Church on this day prays to be preserved from false apostles, and guided by true and faithful pastors.



Let us who love the Church join in the prayer that those who have received the seal of their ministry in direct and unbroken succession from the hands of Christ's chosen apostles, may in no wise bring dishonor upon their sacred calling, but with the same faith, love, and zeal, devote themselves to their Master's service.

“**L**ORD, guard Thy holy spouse, the Church,
From every taint of sin,
Nor let a traitor Judas come
Her altar rails within !

“Give to Thy ministering servants zeal
To spend for Thee their breath,
And, like Matthias, take their cross
And follow Thee to death.

“Give them, like Thee, apart to kneel
Upon the mount of prayer,
Thence to the world with strength return
To labor and to bear.”



SEPTUAGESIMA, SEXAGESIMA, AND
QUINQUAGESIMA.


THESE Sundays, meaning respectively Seventieth, Sixtieth, and Fiftieth, coming before Lent, signify that the first of them is, in round numbers, though not exactly, seventy days before Easter, or the end of Lent, and the next one sixty, and the last one fifty, as the beginning of Lent is forty days before Easter. They begin, by their solemnities, to prepare our hearts and minds for the sorrow and humiliation of the great fast of forty days.

They were observed as early as the time of Gregory the Great, about the year of our Lord 600.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

(MARCH 25.)

“Hail! thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.”—LUKE i: 28.

HE Church commemorates to-day the declaration made by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, that she should become the mother of Christ; and also remembers the incarnation of our Saviour, who, being the Eternal Son of the Father, was at this time made flesh. Let us pray, as the Collect for the day directs us, that having known the incarnation of our Lord by the message of an angel, we may by faith in His cross and passion share in the glory of His resurrection.



R. A. WILLIAMS NY

“**B**ESIDE the poor man’s humble door
His snowy wing the angel stayed ;
And to the peasant’s promised bride
He said, ‘ Hail, highly favored maid !’

“ He spake of God’s mysterious will,
While marvelled much the maiden mild,
As the rapt stranger gladly poured
The wonders of her heaven-sent Child.

“ Then meekly bowed the Virgin’s head,
As deep her thoughtful soul adored :
‘ Be it to me as thou hast said ;
Behold the handmaid of the Lord.’

“ Most loved, most favored, whose young arm
Was cradle for her Saviour’s rest ;
Above all women honored high,
Above all earthly mothers blest.

“ Alas ! that human hearts have erred,
Profaning her dear name with words
That would have grieved her lowly heart,
With prayers that should be all her Lord’s.

“ We bless her with a meeter love,
And think the while, with awful praise,
Who said, ‘ Yea, rather blest are they
Who hear My word, and choose My ways.’ ”

LENT.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly.”—JOEL ii: 15.

THE solemn fast of Lent takes its name from the season in which it falls. The meaning of the Saxon word is *spring*, at which time the Church, by fasting and prayer, makes her preparation for the festival of Easter. It extends over a period of forty days, not counting the Sundays which lie between; for Sunday, being the day on which our Saviour arose, is a feast-day throughout the year. The first day of Lent is known as Ash-Wednesday, and is so called from a custom that prevailed in the ancient Church of putting ashes on the heads of penitents on this day, in token of their humiliation.



The observance of Lent as a preparation for

Easter has been handed down to us from the earliest ages of the Christian Church; and no one who recalls the frequent exhortations of our Saviour to the duty of fasting, can doubt the wisdom and benefit of such an institution. For though it is as much a duty to live a holy life at one time as at another, yet every one knows how apt we are to indulge ourselves, how reluctant to cross our wishes or appetites, how easily we put out of our minds and indefinitely postpone the duties which are unwelcome to our natural instincts and self-love. Therefore it is a very wise and happy provision of the Church thus to set aside stated seasons for recollection and repentance, and for special lessons in self-denial, when solemn ceremonies and the example of others may, as it were, compel us to stop and ponder whether we are going on as we should in our Christian life, cherishing our baptismal grace, remembering our confirmation vows, and keeping ourselves “unspotted from the world.”

The Church does not lay down any precise rule for the manner of our fasting during this season, leaving it to be governed by our conscience and circumstances. There are many who cannot fast, in the strict sense of the

word, abstaining from all food, and of whom it is not required; but few who may not deny themselves some indulgence of appetite, and dress, and amusement, for His sake who spent these long and lonely days in the wilderness, hungering, and burdened with the weight of our sins.

May He help us all to follow the example of His patience and humility, that “when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.”

“**W**ELCOME, deare feast of Lent: who loves
not thee,

He loves not temperance nor authoritie,
But is composed of passion.

The Scriptures bid us fast; the Church says
now:

Give to thy mother what thou wouldst allow
To ev’ry corporation.

“Yet, Lord, instruct us to improve our fast
By starving sinne, and taking such repast
As may our faults controll:

That ev’ry man may revell at his doore,
Not in his parlour; banqueting the poore,
And among those his soul.”



SUNDAYS IN LENT.

ALTHOUGH these Sundays occur in the midst of a season of penitence and fasting, it should be noted that the Sundays themselves, while *in* Lent, are not a part of Lent. Our divine Lord rose on the first day of the week, and His Resurrection, so fraught with hope and blessed promise to our souls, makes Sunday ever a day of gladness. It is a shadow of the coming Easter, a glimpse of joy to gild our grief.

This season of the Church is much employed, and very properly, in preparing for the holy rite of Confirmation, and also by those who have not yet communicated, in making themselves ready, by God's grace, to kneel with the faithful at the Lord's Supper on Easter day.



PALM SUNDAY.

“On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried Hosanna.”—JOHN xii: 12, 13.

PALM SUNDAY is the beginning of the Holy Week, in which our Saviour suffered. Its name commemorates His entry into Jerusalem, when the multitude carried palm-branches, emblems of victory, in their hands, and the air was filled with shouts in His honor from the same voices that were so soon to cry: "Away with Him! crucify Him!" They entered the holy city in triumph, and the children who marched in the procession chanted the Hosanna to His praise when they reached the temple.

The whole week is one of great solemnity, and the Church calls her children together day by day to hear the story of His Passion; that with more and more awe, reverence, and humiliation we may approach the final day when His great sorrow was crowned, and His great sacrifice completed.

"**C**OME, strew your garments in the way,
Your wreaths of palm triumphant bring;
Fling wide thy gate, Jerusalem,
And welcome loud thy lowly King;
He comes, whom Prophet's sang of old,
Meek riding, as their lays foretold.

“ But palms are for the conqueror,
In triumph’s hour to deck his brow ;
He comes to shame, He comes to death,
For whom ye strew those branches now ;
He comes to bear the Hebrew’s scorn,
The Gentile’s scourge, and nail, and thorn.

“ Lord, when Thy little children come
To worship at Thy glorious throne,
To praise their own victorious King,
Oh ! let their thoughts and words be one ;
And make them live in faith and love,
And bear hereafter palms above.”





WEDNESDAY BEFORE EASTER.

WE remember on Wednesday how Judas betrayed his Master, as on Friday we think on the Crucifixion. The memory of the traitor, selling his Lord, wakes our sorrow, and warns us to watch our own souls in temptation. Wednesday is one of the three Litany days of each week.

“ **S**INCE one of Christ’s own twelve on earth
 Forswore his faith, betrayed his trust,
 And gave what whole worlds were not worth,
 For some few grains of silver dust;

“ How should we watch our hearts, and mark
 The first small covetous desire,
 And quench the little growing spark,
 That else may kindle endless fire!”



THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

MAUNDY THURSDAY.

“This do in remembrance of Me.”—
ST. LUKE xxii: 19.

THE Thursday before Easter is called the day of the command, because on this day our Saviour instituted the Holy Sacrament of His Supper. Let us never turn away with cold hearts from this precious feast, but come to it even with fresh love and thankfulness that we are allowed to “do this in remembrance of” Him who did *every thing* for us.

“ ’T WAS on that dark, that doleful night,
When powers of earth and hell arose
Against the Son of God’s delight,
And friends betrayed Him to His foes ;

“ Before the mournful scene began,
He took the bread, and bless’d, and brake ;
What love through all His actions ran !
What wondrous words of grace He spake !

“ ‘ This is My body, broke for sin ;
Receive and eat the living food ;’
Then took the cup, and bless’d the wine :
‘ This the new covenant in My blood.’

“ Jesus ! Thy feast we celebrate,
We show Thy death, we sing Thy name,
Till Thou return, and we shall eat
The marriage supper of the Lamb.”





GOOD FRIDAY.

“And when they were come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him.—LUKE xxiii : 33.

THIS day is well called *Good*, since all our peace in this world, and all our hope for another, rest upon the work that was this day consummated. It is also rightly made the most solemn fast-day of the year, since it was our disobedience that rendered the atonement necessary, our sin for which the Son of God suffered at this time the long, lingering passion of the Cross.

We sometimes see in pictures and in stained church windows the symbols of our Saviour's

suffering—the several instruments of His torture—the whip which scourged Him, the crown of thorns, the spikes and hammer, the sponge upon a reed, the soldier's spear, the ladder mounted to let down the precious corpse. For six hours He hung in anguish on the cross. He was nailed to it in the morning, at the third Jewish hour, or nine o'clock. From the sixth to the ninth hour, that is, with us, from noon till three o'clock, when he expired, darkness like a pall lay on the land—nature, feeling for her Lord, uttered her signs of grief—and, as He died, the earth shook, rocks burst, and the temple veil was torn.

Oh, how humbly, how penitently, how sorrowfully should we kneel before Him to-day, adoring His infinite love, entreating His pardon for the past offences that have so often “crucified Him afresh,” praying for a heart to love Him more who has loved us so wonderfully!

“**J**ESUS! Gentle Sufferer! say,
How shall we, this dreadful day,
Near Thee draw, and to Thee pray?

“We, whose sins with awful power,
Like a cloud did o'er Thee lower,
In that God-excluding hour;

“ We, who still in thought and deed
Often hold the bitter reed
To Thee, in Thy time of need.

“ Canst Thou pardon? wilt Thou pray,
As Thou didst that dreadful day,
For those who took Thy life away?

“ Yes! Thy blood is all my plea,
It was shed, and shed for me,
Therefore to Thy cross I flee.

“ Save me, Saviour! stoop and take
Pity on my soul, and make
This day bright, for Thy dear sake.”





EASTER EVEN.

“And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb.”

—ST. MATTHEW xxvii : 59, 60.

THE Church celebrates to-day the great vigil before our Saviour's resurrection, when He lay in the grave and descended into the state of the dead. He told the penitent thief on the cross, “This day shalt thou be with me *in Paradise*.” They both then rested in Paradise, a

place of pleasure, directly after their painful, shameful death. But this Paradise is not highest Heaven, for when Jesus had arisen from the tomb he said to Mary, "*Touch me not, I have not yet ascended to my Father.*" Indeed, He taught us that none of the dead, that "No man hath ascended up into Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven." All the dead wait, then, in "their own place," in partial joy or partial wo, until they rise at the last day, and are first judged for their good or evil deeds, before they are assigned to Heaven or Hell. This intermediate state, this place between death and judgment, is known by the several names, Sheol or Hades, Hell, Abraham's Bosom, and Paradise.

The ancient Church observed Easter Eve with great pomp and solemnity, illuminating both the churches and their private houses with multitudes of lighted torches, and continuing their vigil till midnight at least, and in some places till morning. It was their custom at this time to baptize adult converts, and



some observe the custom still, bringing the catechumens who have been prepared during Lent to the font on Easter Eve. The custom has a beautiful significance when we remember how *“we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

“**P**AIN and toil are over now;
 Bring the spice and bring the myrrh,
 Fold the limb and bind the brow,
 In the rich man’s sepulchre;
 Far within the garden gloom
 Leave Him in His new-made tomb.

“We, till lights the Easter Heaven,
 With a holy purpose come,
 Watching all this solemn even
 By our Saviour’s lowly tomb;
 Thinking we are buried too,
 We must live with him anew.

“In the fresh Baptismal tide
 In our early childhood dim,
 When our evil nature died,
 We were buried deep with Him,
 We must live like men new-born
 Waiting for a brighter morn.”



EASTER DAY.

“Why seek ye the living amongst the dead? He is not here, but is risen.”—
ST. LUKE xxiv : 5, 6.

THE term Easter, as used by the Church, is from the old Saxon word Oster, signifying “to rise:” the day of the Lord’s rising from the dead.

The Church has always celebrated this great festival of the Resurrection (and universally, on the same day, since A. D. 325) as the most important festival of the year. The joy, the glory, the triumph of this day has been her song, as year after year, since ever

the true Paschal Lamb was slain, she has kept at this time "the Lord's Passover."

Christ is risen! In despite of watch and seal, the stone is rolled away from the sepulchre; and as angels brought the glad tidings of His birth, they bring also the glorious news of His resurrection—pledge of our own rising from the dead. In joyful anthems and exulting hymns the Church takes up the strain, and our hearts thrill even as though, with the disciples, we beheld again "the linen clothes lying;" and, with Mary, heard once more the voice of our risen Lord.

In primitive times, rulers released prisoners on this day, and made gifts to the poor. It was a day for the general exercise of mercy. Freedom was granted slaves, and the rulers gave rich banquets to the people. Hence to this day, in some parts of the country, the Monday following is a holiday with our schools and servants.

The early Christians greeted each other on Easter morning with "Christ is risen;" and were answered in the Latin Church, "He is risen indeed!" or, in the Greek Church, "And hath appeared unto Simon."

"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast." Oh, with

what love, joy, and thankfulness should we keep the feast which typifies to us an eternal Feast in His promise, "where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying!"

"THE Lord is risen, indeed!
The grave hath lost its prey;
With Him shall rise the ransom'd seed,
To reign in endless day.

"The Lord is risen, indeed!
He lives to die no more;
He lives His people's cause to plead,
Whose curse and shame He bore.

"The Lord is risen, indeed!
Attending angels, hear;
Up to the courts of Heaven with speed
The joyous tidings bear.

"Then take your golden lyres,
And strike each living chord:
Join all the bright, celestial choirs,
To sing our risen Lord!"



SUNDAYS AFTER EASTER.

THERE are five Sundays after Easter, falling within the great forty days that come between our Lord's Resurrection and His Ascension. Between His rising from the tomb and ascending from Mount Olivet to the skies, he passed forty days, appearing at times to His disciples, and giving them those instructions which should prepare them to organize His Church, and go abroad upon their missions to the world.

ST. MARK'S DAY.

(APRIL 25.)


“And He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists.”—
EPHESIANS iv: 11.

THE name *Evangelist* is from the Greek, and means “a messenger of good tidings,” and hence “a writer of the gospel or good news.” It was at first given to all that preached the Gospel, but afterward it was confined to those four who wrote the history of our Saviour's life and teachings.

St. Mark was one of the Evangelists. He was the constant companion of St. Peter, wrote his Gospel under St. Peter's direction,



and was by him sent into Egypt, where he planted the Church of Alexandria, and where he finally suffered martyrdom, being seized by the heathen while engaged in the services of the Church at Easter-tide, and dragged through the streets till he died. His symbol is a lion; he tells us of Him who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

“  ND holy men, who lived with our dear
Lord,
Knew all His love, and looked on all
His wo,
By God's great Spirit moved, for us have poured
The words He spake, the deeds He wrought
below;
Cast on our earthly path truth's golden ray,
And told of heavenly joys, and showed the only
way.

“ We round our happy hearths, in quietness
Pore o'er the page, and ponder the sweet strain,
Mindful of them who, in their deep distress,
Evangelist, and saint, and martyr train,
Nursed the pure flame through heathen ages dark,
And call their names to mind, as thine to-day,
Saint Mark!

“ And even for the love we bear that Word,
Those honored names shall fall upon our ear
With a sweet grateful sound ; we love the bird
That sang the strain we loved at twilight clear,
And “ beautiful their feet,” th’ inspired band
Who poured salvation’s strain through all the
darkened land.”

8



ST. PHILIP AND ST. JAMES.

(MAY 1.)

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”—JOHN xiv: 16.

THE Church celebrates to-day the festival of two apostles. St. Philip was one of the earliest disciples of our Lord, and preached after the ascension in Upper Asia, where he made many converts. Toward the close of his life he came to Hierapolis in Phrygia, a great city devoted to the worship of a monstrous serpent. By his prayers and preachings, he succeeded in destroying this hideous idolatry; but the magistrates were so enraged at his success in spreading the Gospel amongst the people, that they ordered him to be crucified.



St. James is called *the brother of our Lord*. Among the Hebrews, cousins were counted brothers. He was chosen Bishop of Jerusalem, and from the holiness of his life gained the title of St. James the Just. He was martyred by the Scribes and Pharisees, who set him upon a pinnacle of the temple at the feast of the Passover, hoping to compel him to renounce Christ in the sight and hearing of all the multitude. But he fearlessly declared Him to be the Son of God; and they, in the fury of disappointment, threw him down from the high place, and with stones and clubs completed his destruction, even while he prayed for them.

“**T**HUS with Thee are linked the names
Of St. Philip and St. James;
Thee they found both night and day,
Precious Truth, and guarded Way;
And in the last martyr strife,
Thee, O Lord, they found their Life.
Sure, what Thou wast to them of yore,
Unchangeable Thou art, and shalt be evermore.”

ROGATION DAYS.

“Ask, and it shall be given you.”—
ST. MATTHEW vii: 7.

ROGATION DAYS are the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension. Their name signifies supplication, and they have been kept by the Church as days of fasting and prayer since the middle of the fifth century. At that time Mamercus, Bishop of Vienne, in France, fearing that disasters were about to befall his diocese, appointed these days to be observed with litanies and penitence, to appease the wrath of God, and turn aside His judgments. The design in observing them is to prepare us for the feast of the Ascension. to pray for God's mercy to protect us from all calamities, and for His blessing upon the fruits of the field.

“**L**ORD, in Thy name Thy servants plead,
And Thou hast sworn to hear;
Thine is the harvest, Thine the seed,
The fresh and fading year.

The former and the latter rain,
 The summer sun and air,
 The green ear and the golden grain,
 All Thine, are ours by prayer.

“Thine too, by right, and ours by grace,
 The wondrous growth unseen,
 The hopes that soothe, the fears that trace,
 The love that shines serene.
 So grant the precious things brought forth
 By sun and moon below,
 That Thee in Thy new heaven and earth,
 We never may forego.”

8*



THE ASCENSION DAY.

(HOLY THURSDAY.)

“And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven.”—ST. LUKE xxiv: 51.

THE last day of our Lord's dwelling on earth has come. For forty days since His resurrection He has lingered near, appearing to one and another, “by the wayside,” and “as they sat at meat,” whenever He saw that sinking courage and wavering faith needed His divine comfort and strengthening. But now the appointed time is over; the last day has come, and with that parting blessing—so precious, so dear forever!—He is borne up and away, far beyond the longing gaze of those who stand straining their eyes to behold the last gleams of His glory.

With joy and praise the Church celebrates this day always, for now is our hope made sure and perfect. The ascension of Christ is the completion of his sacrifice, the consummation of His atonement, the fulfilment of His

the promises. We know now that our Lord has “gone up to prepare a place for us, that where He is, thither we might also ascend and reign with Him in glory.” And oh, what manner of lives should we lead in such an anticipa-



tion! How should we watch, and pray, and hope, and wait, for the day when He shall come again and receive us unto Himself!

Let us pray that “we may also in heart

and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell," even in this our earthly home; so that each and all of us may stand ready and waiting when the message comes that "the Master hath need of us."

“**T**HE Saviour stood at Olivet,
His earthly task was o'er;
And wherefore should He linger yet
On this world's dreary shore?
He raised on high His hands divine,
He blessed His faithful train;
Oh, when shall Adam's guilty line
Such blessing hear again?

“Then slowly tow'rd the expecting sky,
The sky's Creator rose;
Angelic watchers, ranged on high,
Bade Heaven's bright gates uncloze;
And in He came, the Lord of Might,
Eternal and supreme,
Whose presence e'en those worlds of light
Illumed with brighter beam.

“Oh, Thou who thus exalted art,
On whom our souls rely,
Grant to us now in mind and heart,
To dwell with Thee on high!

And when at length, redeemed by Thee,
The just that sleep shall rise,
With theirs our happy portion be,
A home beyond the skies."



WHITSUN-DAY.

“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.”—Acts ii: 3.

THIS festival commemorates the coming of “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,” promised by our Saviour to His disciples, and waited for by them with such eager hope and expectation. It took place on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the anniversary of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. A rushing, mighty wind filled all the house where they were assembled, cloven tongues of fire rested upon them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, so that they were enabled to speak in all languages; and the great multitude present there from all countries heard, each in his native tongue, the wonderful works of God.



Not visibly, not with a rushing wind or tongues of fire does the Holy Spirit descend upon us now when we gather together in the temple of the Lord. Yet is He present with us still, though unseen, at the font, or in the laying on of hands, in prayer or sacred meditation, hovering above us with gifts of comfort and wisdom, ready to enter into every heart that will open to receive Him. Let us then keep this blessed feast of the Church with love, and faith, and special prayer, that we may never grieve or resist the Holy Spirit of God, but that our whole lives may prove His presence in our hearts.

The name Whitsun-day may be derived from Pentecost. The festival, like Easter, includes also the Monday and Tuesday following, that we may more fully understand its great importance, and enter more heartily into the true spirit of its observance.

“**W**HEN God of old came down from heaven,
In power and wrath He came ;
Before His feet the clouds were riven,
Half darkness and half flame :
Around the trembling mountain’s base
The prostrate people lay ;
A day of wrath and not of grace,
A dim and dreadful day.

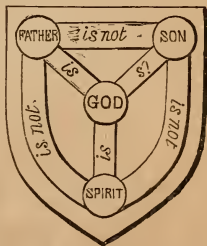
“But when He came the second time,
He came in power and love,
Softer than gale at morning prime
Hover’d His holy Dove.
The fires that rushed on Sinai down,
In sudden torrents dread,
Now gently light, a glorious crown
On every sainted head.”



TRINITY SUNDAY.

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for Thou hast created all things.”—REVELATION iv: 2.

THE observance of Trinity Sunday is of more recent origin than that of the other important festivals. The ancient Church thought it unnecessary to set apart a special day for the praises that were celebrated *every day* in the hymns, creeds, and doxology. But in consequence of the Arian and other heresies—that is, the unbelief of Arius and his followers, who denied this mystery of the Trinity—the Church thought proper to order a particular day for its solemn commemoration. And this day was preferred to any other, because it was not until after the Ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost, that our knowledge of the divine mysteries was completed.



It is the proper culmination of all the great festivals of the year. The Church having celebrated the Birth and Manifestation, the Resurrection and Ascension of our Saviour, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, concludes them all with a special service in honor of the "Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God," by whom we were created, redeemed, and sanctified, and who is the centre of all our faith, hope, and love.

The design of the Church, in the Sundays after Trinity, is to instruct us in the duties and advance us in the graces of the Christian life. As in the earlier part of the year we were "rooted and grounded" in the great doctrines of our faith, we are now taught to put them into practice in our daily life. Let us ask of Him who only can give it, "the spirit to think and do always such things as are right," that with a quiet mind and peaceful heart we may go through the changing year until Advent comes again.



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“**LEAD** us! Heavenly **FATHER**, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guide us, guard us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but Thee;
Yet possessing every blessing,
If our **GOD** our **FATHER** be.

“**SAVIOUR**, breathe forgiveness o'er us,
All our weakness **THOU** dost know;
Thou didst tread the earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest wo:
Lone and dreary, faint and weary,
Through the desert **THOU** didst go.

“**SPIRIT** of our **GOD** descending,
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy;
Love with every feeling blending
Pleasures that can never cloy:
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,
“Nothing can our peace destroy.”





SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY.

IN the first half of the Church year, the Sundays take their character from some special events relating to the birth, life, deeds, death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Lord. On Pentecost, or Whitsun-day, His Holy Spirit descends to guide His Church into all truth; and on Trinity Sunday, the great doctrine of three persons in one Godhead is set forth. Then we enter on a new phase of the religious year, and through the Sundays after Trinity, lessons of duty engage our attention, and we are moved by the sublime precepts of our Master, to cultivate the graces of the Christian life.

ST. BARNABAS' DAY.

(JUNE 11.)

“The son of consolation, a Levite.”—
ACTS iv: 36.

THE proper name of this saint was Joses; but the surname Barnabas, which means “son of consolation,” was given him by the Apostles for his prophetic gifts, his skill in comforting the troubled conscience, or on account of his kindness and charity to the poor. He is supposed to be one of the seventy disciples chosen by our Saviour, and he proved his love and zeal in Jesus’ service by selling all his lands, and giving the money entirely to the poor. He was of the tribe of Levi, and is called by St. Luke and early fathers an Apostle himself.



He first introduced St. Paul, after his conversion, to the Apostles, and convinced them of its sincerity; and he afterward was a com-

panion and co-laborer with St. Paul in many places. He suffered martyrdom at Salamis, a city in his native island of Cyprus, being stoned to death by the Jews. St. Barnabas has left behind him an epistle addressed to Jewish converts.

“ IF Judas here, or Demas there,
Shadowed the Church with shame,
And left the stain of love of gain
Upon the Christian name :

“ If Ananias and his wife
Kept back the price and lied ;
St. Barnabas, through Thy great grace,
More than their lack supplied.

“ In nature and in name alike,
True to Thy Church and Thee ;
The Son of Consolation called,
And rightly named was he.”



NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE
BAPTIST.

(JUNE 24.)

“Many shall rejoice at his birth.”—
ST. LUKE i: 14.

THE Church in commemorating her saints usually celebrates the day of their death, because it was in their deaths that they glorified their Master. But in the case of St. John the Baptist she departs from the rule, because his birth, like that of our Lord, was not only wonderful in itself but the occasion of great rejoicing to those who looked for the coming of the Messiah.

It was declared by the angel who foretold his birth to his father, that he should be the messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, and turn the hearts of the people to Him;



and we know that by his holy life and earnest preaching, he converted multitudes of the Jews, and prepared them for the near approach of our Saviour.

He is called the Baptist, because he baptized all his converts, and had the honor, moreover, of baptizing our Lord Himself. The Church exhorts her children to “repent truly, according to his preaching,” to imitate his holy life, and to follow his example of boldly speaking the truth, and patiently suffering for its sake.

“THIS day the Church commemorates
 The birth-day of St. John;
 Except our Lord’s Nativity,
 She keeps this only one.

“Be this its holy use, to make
 The birth-days of each year,
 Tho’ dear for all their human joy,
 As helps to Heaven most dear.

“The Baptist’s pure and holy life,
 Severe from early youth,
 His bold rebuke of haughty vice,
 His patience for the truth,

“His preparation of Thy way,
His living in Thy love,
His brief, but hard and toilsome day,
His early rest above ;

“Be these our birth-day monitors,
Our souls for Heaven to train,
Teaching us how ‘to live is Christ,’
And how ‘to die is gain.’”



ST. PETER'S DAY.

(JUNE 29)

“Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.”—JOHN xxi. 15.

WE commemorate to-day the martyrdom of St. Peter, a prince of the apostles, and the brother of St. Andrew. He was a fisherman of Galilee, but, at our Saviour's command, left his employment and followed Him; and thenceforth was one of His most devoted disciples. In a moment of weakness and great temptation, he denied his Master; but he repented bitterly, and spent all the rest of his life in most earnest and self-sacrificing ser-



vice; preaching in Samaria, Antioch, Asia, and elsewhere, and bringing many thousands of the Saviour's wandering "sheep" into the fold of the true Shepherd. It is said that he was put to death at Rome, and chose to be crucified with his head downward, because he thought himself unworthy to die in the same position in which his Master suffered. One of St. Peter's symbols, the cock that crowed, has been sometimes placed on steeples, a warning to unfaithful teachers, lest they deny their Lord. He is usually represented with keys in his hand, as it was said to him, "Unto thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven."

"**L**ORD, Thou knowest that I love Thee,
Whom have I in Heaven but Thee?
None on earth I prize above Thee,
Oh, be gracious unto me.
Henceforth all my life's devotion,
I shall deem too poor to prove
With what trembling, fond emotion
I repent, and trust, and love:
Thankful even if my falling
May to others warning be,
And my gentle, kind recalling
Draw some wand'rer back to Thee."

ST. JAMES' DAY.

(JULY 25.)

“And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.”—ACTS xii: 2.

THE Church calls us to-day to observe the example of St. James, who left his father and all he had, to follow Jesus. He is called James the Great, either because he was older than James the Less, or greatly honored by our Lord, being one of His three favored friends. St. James was a Galilean, a fisherman, and a brother of St. John the Evangelist. St. John and he were called, by our Saviour, Boanerges, or “sons of thunder,” in token of the force and vehemence with which they should preach the Gospel, and rouse the nations as it were by a voice of thunder. His ministry was confined to Judea; and—first martyr among



the apostles—he was beheaded at Jerusalem by the order of Herod, who had just begun his reign, and thought by this act to make himself popular with the Jews.

“**T**WO brothers freely cast their lot
With David’s royal Son ;
The cost of conquest counting not,
They deem the battle won.
Brothers in heart, they hope to gain
An undivided joy,
That man may one with man remain,
As boy was one with boy.

“Christ heard, and willed that James should fall,
First prey of Satan’s rage ;
John linger out his fellows all,
And die in bloodless age.
They rest to meet once more above,
Before the Conqueror’s throne :
Thus God grants prayer, but in His love
Makes times and ways His own.”

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.

(AUGUST 24.)

“When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.”—JOHN i: 58.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW was one of the twelve apostles, and is generally believed to be identical with that Nathanael whom Jesus saw “under the fig-tree,” before mortal eyes could have discerned him, and of whom He said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.”



He preached the Gospel in Arabia Felix and India, travelled through Asia, and finally settled in a city of Armenia; where he was most cruelly martyred by the idolatrous people whom he had tried to turn to the faith of Christ—flayed alive, it is said, by order of Astyages, the king. Let us try to imitate the example of his ready faith and patient obe-

dience, that we may be “faithful over a few things,” and, with him, hereafter “enter into the joy of our Lord.”

“**H**IDDEN close from human eye,
Violets do love to lie,
Only for the tell-tale air,
No one could discover where :

But there's an Eye which on them dwells,
With sunshine soft and true,
A Hand which fills their purple bells
With drops of morning dew.

“So beneath the fig-tree's shade,
Where of old Nathanael paid
To the Lord his hidden vows ;
Through its broad and verdant boughs,
Upon the saint's lone hour of need
Fell Heaven's approving smile,
And owned an Israelite indeed,
In whom there was no guile.

“Thence the man unknown and lowly,
Set apart by God, and holy,
Changed in office and in name,
St. Bartholomew became ;
And on his day, the Church doth pray,
Of God, in Jesus' name,
'To love that word which he believed,
Preach, and receive the same.' ”

ST. MATTHEW'S DAY.

(SEPTEMBER 21.)

“And he arose and followed Him.”—

ST. MATTHEW ix: 9.

THE example of St. Matthew teaches us to prefer the service of God to all earthly gain and advantage. He was a tax-gatherer, “sitting at the receipt of custom;” but when Jesus called him, he left his employment at a word, giving up with it all his prospects of future wealth, and henceforth followed the Lord.



He wrote the Gospel that bears his name, and preached in Judea for about eight years; after which he went into Parthia and Ethiopia, and was probably martyred there, though the manner of his death has not been recorded. His symbol is a man or angel: he tells us of our Saviour's genealogy and human nature.

“FROM fisher’s net, from fig-tree’s shade,
God gathers whom He will;
Touched by His grace all men are made
His purpose to fulfil.
So Matthew left his golden gains
At the great Master’s call;
His soul the love of Christ constrains
Freely to give up all.

“O, Saviour! when prosperity
Makes this world hard to leave,
And all its pomps and vanity
Their meshes round us weave;
Then grant us grace, that to Thy call
We may obedient be,
And, cheerfully forsaking all,
May follow only Thee.”





ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

(SEPTEMBER 29.)

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”—HEBREWS i: 14.

THE Church keeps this feast that we may express our thankfulness for God's loving care and kindness in sending forth guardian angels to minister to His children. They do not appear to us now in visible presence, as in the early days when they were so often God's messen-

gers to men ; but we cannot doubt that they are about us still, unseen and unheard, yet ever watchful to shield us from danger, comfort us in trouble, and strengthen us against temptation.

Of little children especially, we are told that "their angels" always behold the face of the Father ; and who can tell what perils and troubles the heedless feet of the young might stray into, were it not for the constant watch and ward of these "ministering spirits?" Children, then, should love this festival, and learn from it not only to be thankful for the holy and blessed guardianship of angels, but to remember that they are always in the presence of those pure and gentle creatures, and try to be like them in gentleness and purity ; driving away evil thoughts, refraining from angry words and sinful acts, and ever ready to do kind things for others.

Among the choirs and orders of angels, St. Michael is an arch-angel, that is over one of peculiar power and dignity, having an army of angels under his command, and is frequently mentioned in Scripture as coming to the help of God's servants. He is held as the champion of the Church, watching its welfare and defeating the dragon, the Devil.

“ **I**N our journeyings, in our restings, on the
land or on the sea,
In our solitude and sorrow, in our gather-
ings and glee,
In the day of degradation, in the hour of joy
and pride,
Those pure and watchful ministers are ever by
our side ;
Sweet messengers of love and hope, they journey
to and fro,
And consolation follows in their footsteps as
they go.
O Thou, whom angels worshipped ere time or
we began,
And whose divine compassion gave their guar-
dianship to man,
Throughout this mortal warfare let them still my
champions be,
And in the last stern conflict, ‘give them charge
concerning me !’ ”



ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST.


(OCTOBER 18.)

“Luke, the beloved physician.”—COLLOSSIANS iv: 14.

ST. LUKE was born in Antioch, a city famous for learning and wealth, but more honored for the fact that here the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians. His peculiar profession was that of physic, but it is said that he was also skilful in painting, and there are pictures still in existence that some claim to have been drawn by him. He was probably converted by St. Paul, during his abode at Antioch; for after his conversion, he became St. Paul's inseparable companion, sharing all his labors and all his dangers, even when others forsook him, and never leaving him till his death.



He wrote the Gospel which bears his name during his travels with St. Paul in Achaia, and his history of the Acts of the Apostles during St. Paul's two years of imprisonment. It is not certainly known where or how he died, though some historians affirm that he preached the Gospel successfully in Egypt and Greece, until a party of infidels, getting him into their power, hanged him upon an olive tree. His symbol is a calf or ox, for Jesus was a sacrifice, and his Gospel sets forth our Lord most plainly as both Priest and Victim.

“ H, God! on such a day as this,
Let us with special prayer
All those who heal throughout our land
Commend to Thy good care.

“And make them hallowed means of good
In all they think and do,
While truthful to their healing art,
Not unto Thee less true.

“Physicians of the body they—
By grace's soft control,
May they become, like good St. Luke,
Physicians of the soul!”

ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE.

(OCTOBER 28.)

“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ.”—


ST. JUDE i: 1.

ST. SIMON and St. Jude were both apostles. The first is also called Simon Zelotes, and the Canaanite, to distinguish him from Simon Peter. He preached the Gospel in Egypt and Africa, and afterward in Britain, where, as some say, he was crucified. But others state that he died in Persia, by the hands of idolatrous priests, and that he was sawn asunder.



St. Jude is reckoned among the brethren of our Lord, being the son of Joseph and brother of James; but in his humility he calls himself only “the *servant* of Jesus

Christ." He is called in Scripture *Lebbæus*, expressive of prudence and understanding, and also *Thaddeus*, to denote one zealous in God's praise. He preached in Judea and Galilee, and has left one epistle. It is believed that he was put to death in Persia by the Magi.

“  H, warm, devoted men were ye,
And zealous for your Lord—
Dispensing wide with fervency,
The pure, life-giving word!

“ Your various names the truth attest
That ye were filled with zeal—
Men that could neither pause nor rest
Till ye made others feel.

“ Fond history loves the tale to tell
That ye together strove,
Together bade this world farewell,
To wait your crowns above.”



ALL SAINTS' DAY.

(NOVEMBER 1.)

“Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”—REVELATION xiv : 12.

THE design of the Church in appointing this festival is chiefly to honor God in the holy example of His saints, and also to encourage us who remain yet upon the battle-ground, to fight the same “good fight of faith.” As she cannot assign a special day for every saint and martyr, she here includes them all in one common

festival. She inculcates, too, at this time, the important doctrine of the "communion of saints," reminding us that all true Christians are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," of the same family with those in Paradise. Therefore, as we thank God for their good example and their labors of love, so we cannot doubt that they rejoice in our conversion, and pray that we may also enter into their unspeakable joy.

Oh, let us then run with patience this race that is set before us, following in the footsteps of those who have "kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," that at the end we also may stand before the Lamb, and join in their glorious song—

"Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever! Amen."

"THESE through fiery trials trod;
These from great affliction came;
Now before the throne of God,
Sealed with His eternal name:
Clad in raiment pure and white,
Victor palms in every hand,
Through their great Redeemer's might,
More than conquerors they stand.

“Hunger, thirst, disease unknown,
On immortal fruits they feed ;
Them the Lamb amidst the throne
Shall to living fountains lead :
Joy and gladness banish sighs,
Perfect love dispels their fears ;
And forever from their eyes
God shall wipe away their tears.”



